Rule: 465.38. Psychological Services for Schools.

Action: Proposed Amendment

Comment: The proposed amendments will update the description of the scope of practice for Licensed Specialists in School Psychology to better reflect the full scope of practice and align with national standards, without substantively altering the scope of practice.

§465.38. Psychological Services for Schools.

(a) This rule acknowledges the unique difference in the delivery of school psychological services in public and private schools from psychological services in the private sector. The Council recognizes the purview of the State Board of Education and the Texas Education Agency in safeguarding the rights of school children in Texas. The mandated multidisciplinary team decision making, hierarchy of supervision, regulatory provisions, and past traditions of school psychological service delivery both nationally and in Texas, among other factors, allow for rules of practice in public and private schools which reflect these occupational distinctions from the private practice of psychology.

(b) Scope of Practice.

1. School psychological services include the delivery of a comprehensive range of services to support the academic, emotional, social, behavioral, and mental health development and needs of students, which includes the promotion of students’ strengths, as well as the identification and treatment of mental health disorders and disabilities impacting student educational performances.
2. School psychological services include, but are not limited to:

(A) Assessment, which includes psychoeducational, cognitive, psychological, emotional, behavioral, and other assessments; universal screenings; and various data collection methods to:

(i)\_ identify and address student academic, social, emotional, developmental, and mental and behavioral health needs;

(ii) make eligibility recommendations for special education services;

(iii) assess risk of harm to self or others, and;

(iv) evaluate effectiveness of services and practices.

(B) Prevention and Intervention services to support student learning, which include facilitating delivery of curricula and instructional strategies, school-wide, group, and individual interventions to support student achievement, student wellness, mental and behavioral health, promoting safe learning environments and addressing other barriers to learning.

(C) Mental and Behavioral Health Services, which includes individual, group and/or school-wide services to promote social, emotional, mental and behavioral health, and prosocial and positive behaviors. Such services also include individual or group counseling, behavioral assessment and intervention, and consultation with families, educational staff, and other interested parties.

(D) Consultation and Collaboration, which includes engagement in collaborative problem-solving as a vehicle to plan, implement, and evaluate academic and mental and behavioral health services, which may include psychoeducation for students, families, school personnel, and other relevant parties.

(E) Development of programs, which includes designing, implementing, or evaluating safe, supportive, and educationally and psychologically sound learning environments; engaging in crisis prevention, response, and intervention; acting as a catalyst for educator and family engagement in adaptations and innovations; and facilitating the psychoeducational development of individual families or groups.

~~(1) An LSSP is a person who is trained to address psychological and behavioral problems manifested in and associated with educational systems by utilizing psychological concepts and methods in programs or actions which attempt to improve the learning, adjustment and behavior of students. Such activities include, but are not limited to, addressing special education eligibility, conducting manifestation determinations, and assisting with the development and implementation of individual educational programs, conducting behavioral assessments, and designing and implementing behavioral interventions and supports.~~

~~(2) The assessment of emotional or behavioral disturbance, solely for educational purposes, using psychological techniques and procedures is considered the practice of school psychology.~~

(3) The delivery of school psychological services in the public schools of this state shall be consistent with nationally recognized standards for the practice of school psychology. Licensees providing school psychological services in a private school should comply with those same nationally recognized standards where possible, but at a minimum, must comply with all applicable Council rules, including those related to informed consent, notification of the right to file a complaint, competency, forensic services, and misuse of services.

(c) The specialist in school psychology license permits the licensee to provide school psychological services only in public and private schools. A person utilizing this license may not provide psychological services in any context or capacity outside of a public or private school.

(d) The correct title for an individual holding a specialist in school psychology license is Licensed Specialist in School Psychology or (LSSP), or the individual may use the title School Psychologist as referenced in §21.003 of the Education Code. An LSSP who has achieved certification as a Nationally Certified School Psychologist (NCSP) may use this credential along with the license title of LSSP.

(e) Providers of Psychological Services Within the Public Schools.

(1) School psychological services may be provided in Texas public schools only by individuals authorized by this Council to provide such services. Individuals who may provide such school psychological services include:

(A) LSSPs; and

(B) interns and post-doctoral fellows working towards licensure as a psychologist.

(2) Licensees who do not hold the specialist in school psychology license may contract for specific types of psychological services, such as clinical psychology, counseling psychology, neuropsychology, and family therapy, but any such contracting may not involve the broad range of school psychological services listed in subsection (b)(1) of this section.

(3) An LSSP who contracts with a school to provide school psychological services must notify the school of any intent or plan to subcontract or assign those services to another provider prior to entering into the agreement. An LSSP subject to this provision shall be responsible for ensuring the school psychological services delivered comply with subsection (b)(3) of this section.

(f) Compliance with Applicable Education Laws. LSSPs shall comply with all applicable state and federal laws affecting the practice of school psychology, including, but not limited to:

(1) Texas Education Code;

(2) Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), 20 U.S.C. §1232g;

(3) Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA), 20 U.S.C. §1400 et seq.;

(4) Texas Public Information Act, Texas Government Code, Chapter 552;

(5) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973;

(6) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) 42 U.S.C. §12101; and

(7) HIPAA when practicing in a private school.

(g) Informed Consent in a Public School. Informed consent for a Licensed Specialist in School Psychology must be obtained in accordance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act (IDEIA) and the U.S. Department of Education's rules governing parental consent when delivering school psychological services in the public schools, and is considered to meet the requirements for informed consent under Board rules. No additional informed consent, specific to any Council rules, is necessary in this context. Licensees providing psychological services under subsection (e)(2) of this section, or in a private school however, must obtain informed consent as otherwise required by the Council rules